

# POLITICS 505: EXPERIMENTAL POLITICAL SCIENCE

Princeton University

Fall 2021

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<b>Time:</b>	M 1:30 – 4:20pm	<b>Location:</b>	Corwin Hall 127

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**Course Page:** <https://princeton.instructure.com/courses/4681>

**Office Hours:** After class, or by appointment.

**Reference Texts:** This is a short list of useful **optional** (unless noted in the syllabus) resources that encapsulate the aims of this course. The first two works explore the philosophy and execution of experiments in the social sciences. The third and fourth books discuss the mechanics of causal inferences and of the various estimation strategies that often supplement experimental research designs.

- Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2012. *Field Experiments*. Subtitle: Design, Analysis and Interpretation. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Duflo, Esther, Rachel Glennerster, and Michael Kremer. 2007. “Chapter 61 Using Randomization in Development Economics Research: A Toolkit.” In *Handbook of Development Economics*, edited by T. Paul Schultz and John A. Strauss, 4:3895–962. New York: Elsevier. doi:[10.1016/S1573-4471\(07\)04061-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1573-4471(07)04061-2)
- Imbens, Guido W., and Donald P. Rubin. 2015. *Causal Inference for Statistics, Social, and Biomedical Sciences: an Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2009. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics*. Subtitle: an Empiricist’s Companion. Princeton University Press.

**Course Description:** The goal of this course is to introduce students to the theoretical and practical features of experimental political science, particularly natural and field experiments. There is a special emphasis on the importance of distinguishing between policy-based and institution-based interventions, with particular attention given to the promise of the latter for political economy research. The course is divided into four sections. The first section of the course introduces students to the methodological underpinnings of experimental scholarship, particularly causal inference and the motivation behind randomization. The section focuses on practical application and experimental design, including randomization techniques, sample selection, and power analysis. It also includes a set of readings that address common problems and solutions. The second section focuses on experiments that occur in nature and how to extract causal estimates from these experiments. The third section covers the conceptualization and operationalization of laboratory (and laboratory in the field) experiments, as well as survey experiments. The final section will cover field experiments and innovations in experimental methods for evaluating institutions. The course will conclude with student presentations of research projects.

**Prerequisites:** There are no formal prerequisites for this course. An undergraduate-level understanding of probability, statistics, and linear algebra is helpful, but not necessary.

**Grading Policy:** Response papers (20%); replication projects (30%); peer review exercise (10%); final project (40%).

**Note:** Given the content of this course and the current trajectory of our discipline, students are strongly recommended to familiarize themselves with [The Journal of Experimental Political Science](#) and the American Political Science Association section on experimental research, [Section 42: Experimental Research](#).

## Section I: Introduction

This section will provide a general introduction to causal inference and some issues that can arise. Issues with identification and practical concerns when running experiments will be covered. Specific topics include: average treatment effects, intention to treat, matching, minimal detectable effect, interference, and causal mediation.

### Week 1 (September 13, 2021)

No readings.

### Week 2 (September 20, 2021)

1. Duflo, Esther, Rachel Glennerster, and Michael Kremer. 2007. "Chapter 61 Using Randomization in Development Economics Research: A Toolkit." In *Handbook of Development Economics*, edited by T. Paul Schultz and John A. Strauss, 4:3895–962. New York: Elsevier. doi:[10.1016/S1573-4471\(07\)04061-2](#)
2. Deaton, Angus S. 2010. "Instruments, Randomization, and Learning about Development." *Journal of Economic Literature* 48, No. 2 (Jun.): 424–55. doi:[10.1257/jel.48.2.424](#)
3. Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2012. *Field Experiments*. Subtitle: Design, Analysis and Interpretation. New York: W.W. Norton., Chapters 1 and 2.
4. Rubin, Donald B. 1974. "Estimating Causal Effects of Treatments in Randomized and Nonrandomized Studies." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 66, no. 5 (Oct.): 688–701. doi:[10.1037/h0037350](#)
5. Samii, Cyrus. 2020. "Reasons for Policy Experimentation that Have Nothing to do with Selection Bias." *World Development* 127, (Mar.): doi:[10.1016/j.worlddev.2019.104825](#)

### Week 3 (September 27, 2021)

6. Imai, Kosuke, and Marc Ratkovic. 2013. "Estimating Treatment Effect Heterogeneity in Randomized Program Evaluation." *The Annals of Applied Statistics* 7, no. 1 (Mar.): 443–70. doi:[10.1214/12-AOAS593](#)
7. Imai, Kosuke, Luke Keele, and Dustin Tingley. 2010. "A General Approach to Causal Mediation Analysis." *Psychological Methods* 15, no. 4 (Dec.): 309–34. doi:[10.1037/a0020761](#)
8. Aronow, Peter M., and Cyrus Samii. 2017. "Estimating Average Causal Effects under General Interference, with Application to a Social Network Experiment." *The Annals of Applied Statistics* 11, no. 4 (Dec.): 1912–47. doi:[10.1214/16-AOAS1005](#)

9. McDermott, Rose, Peter K. Hatemi. 2020. "Ethics in field experimentation: A call to establish new standards to protect the public from unwanted manipulation and real harms." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117, no. 48 (Dec.): 30014-30021. doi:[10.1073/pnas.2012021117](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2012021117)
10. Slough, Tara. 2021. "The Ethics of Electoral Experimentation: Design-Based Recommendations." Working Paper. [Available Here](#).

## Section II: Natural Experiments

### Week 4 (October 4, 2021)

11. Gulzar, Saad, Nicholas Haas, and Benjamin Pasquale. 2020. "Does Political Affirmative Action Work, and for Whom? Theory and Evidence on India's Scheduled Areas." *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 4 (Aug.):1230-1246. doi:[10.1017/S0003055420000532](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000532)
12. Washington, Ebonya. 2012. "Do Majority-Black Districts Limit Black's Representation? The Case of the 1990 Redistricting." *The Journal of Law and Economics* 55, no. 2: 251-274. doi:[10.1086/661991](https://doi.org/10.1086/661991)
13. Fujiwara, Thomas. 2015. "Voting Technology, Political Responsiveness, and Infant Health: Evidence From Brazil." *Econometrica* 83, (2): 423-64. doi:[10.3982/ECTA11520](https://doi.org/10.3982/ECTA11520)
14. Pons, Vincent, and Cl  mence Tricaud. 2018. "Expressive Voting and Its Cost: Evidence From Runoffs With Two or Three Candidates." *Econometrica* 86 (5): 1621-49. doi:[10.3982/ECTA15373](https://doi.org/10.3982/ECTA15373)

**Replication 1:** Enos, Ryan D. 2016. "What the Demolition of Public Housing Teaches Us about the Impact of Racial Threat on Political Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 60, (1): 123-42. doi:[10.1111/ajps.12156](https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12156)

### Week 5 (October 11, 2021)

15. Xu, Guo. 2018. "The Costs of Patronage: Evidence from the British Empire." *American Economic Review* 108, no. 11 (Nov.): 3170-98. doi:[10.1257/aer.20171339](https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20171339)
16. Derenoncourt, Ellora. 2021. "Can you move to opportunity? Evidence from the Great Migration." Working Paper (Forthcoming in American Economic Review). [Available Here](#).
17. Dell, Melissa, and Pablo Querubin. 2018. "Nation Building Through Foreign Intervention: Evidence from Discontinuities in Military Strategies." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 133, no. 2 (May): 701-64. doi:[10.1093/qje/qjx037](https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjx037)
18. Sviatschi, Maria M. 2021. "Spreading Gangs: Exporting US Criminal Capital to El Salvador." Working Paper (Revise and Resubmit in the American Economic Review). [Available Here](#).
19. Guardado, Jenny. 2021. "Hierarchical Oversight and the Value of Public Office: Evidence from Colonial Peru." Working Paper (Conditionally Accepted in the Journal of Politics). [Available Here](#).

**Replication 2:** Wantchekon, Leonard, Marko Klašnja, and Natalija Novta. 2015. "Education and Human Capital Externalities: Evidence from Colonial Benin." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130, no. 2 (May): 703–57. doi:[10.1093/qje/qjv004](https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjv004)

## Fall Break - No Class (October 18, 2021)

### Week 7 (October 25, 2021)

Project Proposal Draft Presentations

## Section III: Laboratory and Survey Experiments

### Week 8 (November 1, 2021)

20. Bullock, Will, Kosuke Imai, and Jacob N. Shapiro. 2011. "Statistical Analysis of Endorsement Experiments: Measuring Support for Militant Groups in Pakistan." *Political Analysis* 19, (4): 363–84. doi:[10.1093/pan/mpr031](https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpr031)
21. Blattman, Christopher, Alexandra C. Hartman, and Robert A. Blair. 2014. "How to Promote Order and Property Rights under Weak Rule of Law? An Experiment in Changing Dispute Resolution Behavior through Community Education." *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 1 (Feb.): 100–120. doi:[10.1017/S0003055413000543](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000543)
22. Chan, Jimmy, et al. 2018. "Deliberating Collective Decisions." *Review of Economic Studies* 85, no. 2 (Apr.): 929–63. doi:[10.1093/restud/rdx028](https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdx028)
23. Chandrasekhar, Arun G., Cynthia Kinnan, and Horacio Larreguy. 2018. "Social Networks as Contract Enforcement: Evidence from a Lab Experiment in the Field." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 10, no. 4 (Oct.): 43–78. doi:[10.1257/app.20150057](https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20150057)
24. Alrababa'h, Ala', William Marble, Salma Mousa, and Alexandra Siegel. 2019. "Can Exposure to Celebrities Reduce Prejudice? The Effect of Mohamed Salah on Islamophobic Behaviors and Attitudes." Immigration Policy Lab Working Paper 19-04. [Available Here](#).

**Replication 3:** White, Ismail K., Chryl N. Laird, and Troy D. Allen. 2014. "Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-interest." *American Political Science Review* 108, (4): 783–800. doi:[10.1017/S000305541400046X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541400046X)

### Week 9 (November 8, 2021)

25. Schaeffer, Nora Cate, and Jennifer Dykema. 2020. "Advances in the Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 46, (1): 37–60. doi:[10.1146/annurev-soc-121919-054544](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-121919-054544)
26. Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. 2007. "The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined." *Political Analysis* 15, (1): 1–20. doi:[10.1093/pan/mpj008](https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpj008)
27. Alesina, Alberto, Matteo F. Ferroni, and Stefanie Stancheva. 2021. "Perceptions of Racial Gaps, their Causes, and Ways to Reduce Them." Working Paper. [Available Here](#).
28. Hainmueller, Jens, and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2015. "The Hidden American Immigration Consensus: A Conjoint Analysis of Attitudes toward Immigrants." *American Journal of Political Science* 59, (3): 529–48. doi:[10.1111/ajps.12138](https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12138)

29. García-Ponce, Omar, Thomas Zeitzoff, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2021. "Are voters too afraid to tackle corruption? Survey and experimental evidence from Mexico." *Political Science Research and Methods* (First View): 1-19. doi:[10.1017/psrm.2020.49](https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2020.49)

**Replication 4:** Dal Bó, Pedro, Andrew Foster, and Louis Putterman. 2010. "Institutions and Behavior: Experimental Evidence on the Effects of Democracy." *American Economic Review* 100, no. 5 (Dec.): 2205–29. doi:[10.1257/aer.100.5.2205](https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.100.5.2205)

## Section IV: Field Experiments and Experiments with Institutions

### Week 10 - Field (November 15, 2021)

30. Fenton, Jeron, and LaFleur Stephens-Dougan. 2021. "Are Black state legislators responsive to emails associated with the NAACP versus BLM? A field experiment on Black intragroup politics." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* (First View): 1-16. doi:[10.1017/rep.2021.13](https://doi.org/10.1017/rep.2021.13)
31. Cruz, Cesi, Philip Keefer, and Julien Labonne. 2021. "Buying Informed Voters: New Effects of Information on Voters and Candidates." *The Economic Journal* 131, 635 (Apr.): 1105-1134. doi:[10.1093/ej/ueaa112](https://doi.org/10.1093/ej/ueaa112)
32. Breza, Emily. 2016. "Field Experiments, Social Networks, and Development." in *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Networks* Eds. Yann Bramoullé, Andrea Galeotti, and Brian W. Rogers (Apr). doi:[10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199948277.013.25](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199948277.013.25)
33. Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin." *World Politics* 55, (3): 399-422. doi:[doi:10.1353/wp.2003.0018](https://doi.org/10.1353/wp.2003.0018)
34. Cheema, Ali, Sarah Khan, Shandana Khan-Mohmand, and Asad Liaqat. 2019. "Canvassing the Gatekeepers: A Field Experiment to Increase Women's Electoral Turnout in Pakistan." Working Paper. [Available Here](#).

**Replication 5:** Banerjee, Abhijit, Esther Duflo, Clément Imbert, Santosh Mathew, and Rohini Pande. 2020. "E-governance, Accountability, and Leakage in Public Programs: Experimental Evidence from a Financial Management Reform in India" *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 12, no. 4 (Oct.): 39-72. doi:[10.1257/app.20180302](https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20180302)

### Week 11 (November 22, 2021)

35. Chassang, Sylvain, Gerard Padró I Miquel, and Erik Snowberg. 2012. "Selective Trials: A Principal-Agent Approach to Randomized Controlled Experiments." *American Economic Review* 102, no. 4 (Jun.): 1279–309. doi:[10.1257/aer.102.4.1279](https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.102.4.1279)
36. Atchade, Yves, Pierre N'Guimkeu, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2017. "Randomized Evaluation of Institutions: Theory with Applications to Voting and Deliberation Experiments." Working paper. [Available Here](#).
37. Dal Bó, Ernesto, et al. 2020. "Government Decentralization Under Changing State Capacity: Experimental Evidence from Paraguay." Working paper. [Available Here](#).
38. Beath, Andrew, et al. 2016. "Electoral Rules and Political Selection: Theory and Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan." *Review of Economic Studies* 83, no. 3 (Jul.): 932–68. doi:[10.1093/restud/rdw018](https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdw018)

39. Casey, Katherine, Abou Bakarr Kamara, and Niccoló Meriggi. 2021. "An Experiment in Candidate Selection." *American Economic Review* 111, no. 5 (May): 1575-1612. doi:[10.1257/aer.20200125](https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20200125)

## Week 12 (November 29, 2021)

40. Kendall, Chad, Tommaso Nannicini, and Francesco Trebbi. 2015. "How Do Voters Respond to Information? Evidence from a Randomized Campaign." *American Economic Review* 105, no. 1 (Jan.): 322-53. doi:[10.1257/aer.20131063](https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20131063)
41. Raffler, Pia. 2020. "Does Political Oversight of the Bureaucracy Increase Accountability? Field Experimental Evidence from a Dominant Party Regime. Forthcoming in *American Political Science Review*. [Available Here](#).
42. Humphreys, Macartan, Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra, and Peter Van der Windt. 2019. "Exporting Democratic Practices: Evidence from a Village Governance Intervention in Eastern Congo." *Journal of Development Economics* 140, (Sep.): 279-301. doi:[10.1016/j.jdevec.2019.03.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdevec.2019.03.011)
43. Olken, Benjamin A. 2010. "Direct Democracy and Local Public Goods: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia." *American Political Science Review* 104, (2): 243-267. doi:[10.1017/S0003055410000079](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055410000079)
44. Karpowitz, Christopher F., Tali Mendelberg, and Lee Shaker. 2012. "Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation." *American Political Science Review* 106, (3): 533-47. doi:[10.1017/S0003055412000329](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000329)

**Replication 6:** Fujiwara, Thomas, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2013. "Can Informed Public Deliberation Overcome Clientelism? Experimental Evidence from Benin." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 5, no. 4 (Oct.): 241-55. doi:[10.1257/app.5.4.241](https://doi.org/10.1257/app.5.4.241) **and** Wantchekon, Leonard, et al. 2020. "Policy Deliberation and Voter Persuasion: Experimental Evidence from an Election in the Philippines" forthcoming in *American Journal of Political Science* doi:[10.1111/ajps.12566](https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12566)

## Week 13 (December 6, 2021)

Project Proposal Final Presentations